



CALIFORNIA LABOR NEWS

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FROM ASSEMBLYMEMBER PAUL KORETZ
CHAIR, LABOR & EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

KORETZ HELPS MEDIATE LABOR DISPUTE

Assemblymember Paul Koretz recently played a key role in mediating a troubling labor dispute between American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 800 and Jewish Family Services (JFS).

For several months, Local 800 and JFS had been at odds over questions of interpretation of several terms of the current collective bargaining agreement between the two organizations. The dispute threatened to jeopardize the important working relationship between the two groups in advance of contract negotiations next year.

On February 24th, Assemblymember Koretz convened a meeting in his district office to attempt to resolve the dispute. Attending the meeting were representatives of Local 800, several board members of JFS, Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg and West Hollywood Mayor Abbe Land. At the meeting, Assemblymember Koretz pointed out the important and complementary roles played by JFS and their hard-working employees, and emphasized the critical need to preserve a good working relationship between the parties.

Following the meeting, both sides were able to reach agreement on the outstanding issues and the crisis was successfully resolved. Both parties pointed to the February 24th meeting and the role played by Assemblymember Koretz as crucial in bringing the dispute to an end.

AFSCME Local 800 represents roughly 400 community service workers of the non-profit JFS. Local 800 also represents employees at the Jewish Federation and the other various agencies that together serve several thousand Southern California residents each week.

IMPORTANT LABOR BILLS INTRODUCED IN 2006

This year represents Assemblymember Paul Koretz's final year as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Labor and Employment.

While Governor Schwarzenegger has vetoed almost every labor bill to cross his desk during the last two years, organized labor and worker advocates continue to work hard for working families by proposing new and innovative ways to protect California workers.

Some of the more important labor bills introduced so far in 2006 include the following:

- [AB 1835](#) (Lieber): Increases the minimum wage by \$1.00 over two years and subsequently indexes the minimum wage for inflation.
- [AB 2555](#) (Oropeza): Increases penalties for employers who discriminate in the payment of wages based on gender and requires employers to report information on their rates of pay for workers.
- [AB 2929](#) (Laird): Establishes important accountability requirements for apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades.

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Koretz Receives Labor Warrior Award

On May 1, 2006, The California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO and the State Building and Construction Trade Council of California honored Assemblyman Koretz for his legislative efforts on behalf of working families.

The award was presented at Labor's 2006 Joint Legislative Conference by California Labor Federation Executive Secretary-Treasurer Art Pulaski. Pulaski referred to Koretz as a "quiet man who makes waves" in advocating for workers and their families.

In accepting the award, Koretz stated, "There is nothing I am more proud of than my opportunity to serve the great working men and women of this state over the last six years!"

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JOINT LABOR HEARING EXPLORES STATUS OF STATE'S IMPLEMENTATION ON LANDMARK SWEATFREE PROCUREMENT LAW

On March 3, 2006, the Assembly Committee on Labor and Employment and the Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations conducted a joint hearing on the status of the state's implementation of a landmark "sweatfree" procurement law passed in 2003.

On October 8, 2003, Governor Davis signed Senate Bill 578 (Alarcón), Chapter # 711, Statutes of 2003. SB 578 represented a landmark piece of legislation designed to establish a statewide "sweatfree" procurement policy to ensure that specified goods purchased by the state are produced in workplaces free of sweatshop conditions.

In recent years, other local entities (including cities, counties, school districts, colleges and universities) across the state and the nation have enacted their own policies and/or ordinances designed to prevent the procurement of materials produced by sweatshop labor. Many of these efforts couple "sweatfree" codes of conduct with enforcement facilitated through the use of an independent outside monitor.

At the hearing, representatives of the Department of Industrial Relations and the Department of General

Services testified about the current status of implementation of SB 578. Former State Senator Tom Hayden, who was instrumental in the passage of the law, testified at the hearing, as did representatives of local entities, independent monitoring groups, and worker advocates.

The hearing revealed that, while SB 578 is a good first step, much more needs to be done. The current law essentially requires contractors to self-certify that they have complied with the requirements of the "sweatfree" code of conduct. However, the state lacks an effective method of ensuring that the requirements of the law are actually met.

The hearing also demonstrated that local entities with their own procurement policies are actively pursuing use of an independent monitor as an enforcement tool. It is clear that the state needs to pursue such enforcement methods to ensure that we are living up to the promise of SB 578.

Discussions are continuing to explore the need for follow-up legislation and/or funding to ensure that this takes place.

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- [AB 3051](#) (Labor Committee): Establishes reporting requirements to monitor the effectiveness of the Economic and Employment Enforcement Coalition (EEEC), the state's new effort to combat the underground economy.
- [SB 1204](#) (Perata): Requires hospitals to implement "zero lift policies" to protect the health of nurses and other health care professionals during patient transfers.
- [SB 1213](#) (Dunn): Authorizes port owner-operators to collectively negotiate concerning terms and conditions of their work.
- [SB 1468](#) (Alarcón): Extends the sunset date on recent important legislation protecting car wash workers.
- [SB 1745](#) (Kuehl): Amends existing housing and employment discrimination to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.